> his foreign policy or not, and when we consider this fact, the small majority which Mr. Wilson maintained in the electoral college cannot possibly be taken as an endorsement, though it cannot be taken as a repudiation either. The whole campaign was a muddle and the returns show that the voter was a good deal confused.[51]

This was an accurate summary of the position as it stood, or at least as it appeared to discerning eyes, at and immediately after the election. But it *Swift reversal* is almost a classic example of the happening *of situation* of the unexpected. Here was an election fought when both parties were convinced that the idea of intervention in the War was universally unpopular. The only contention between them in their rival appeals was as to which of them was the less likely to be tempted to join in the fray. Hughes' friends said that he loved the Germans more than Wilson did. Wilson replied by pointing to the fact that he had already successfully kept the country out of war for over two years. Who would have predicted at that date that Germany would have deliberately provoked the pacific and hesitating Wilson to gird on his sword and after an interval to unsheath it? Colonel House records that on 14th November, 1916, President Wilson was planning to use his newly confirmed authority to propose peace

negotiations—
a course which House opposed, because he felt that Germany would, at this stage, insist on terms which America could not recommend to the Allies, and that any attempt to force peace at this stage would be playing the game of German militarism. The President took a different view. He earnestly wished for peace, and was anxious to precipitate negotiations.